

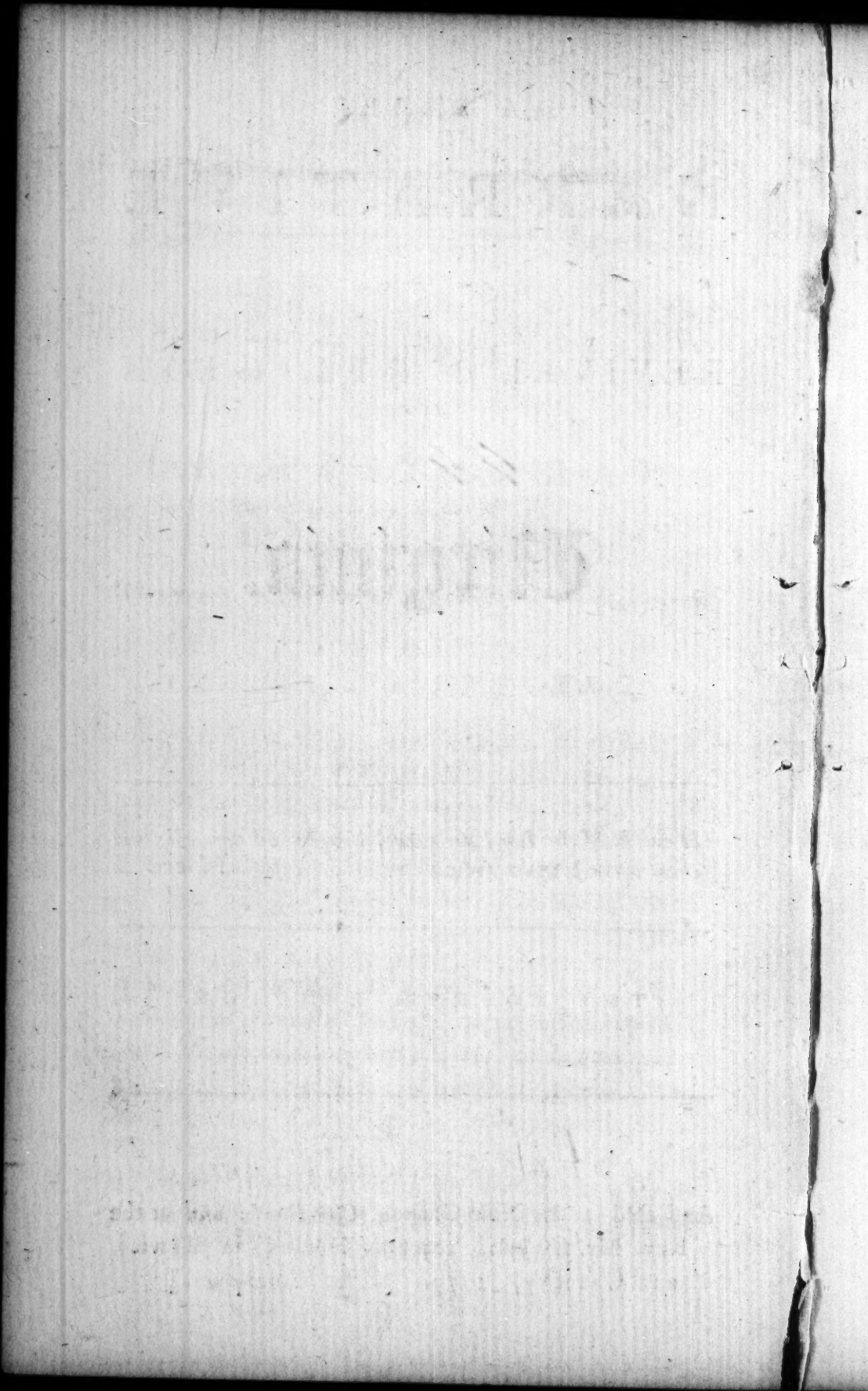
A BRIEF
NARRATIVE
OF THE
REVIVAL OF RELIGION
IN
Virginia.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

*The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them
that have pleasure therein.* Pf. cxi. 2.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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A BRIEF

NARRATIVE, &c.



Dear Sir,

YOU was pleased, when in *Virginia*, to
Y desire a Narrative of the Work of God
in these parts. I shall give you matter
of fact, in a plain, artless dress, relating
only what I have myself seen and heard, and what I
have received from men on whose Judgment and Ve-
racity I can fully depend.

That you may have a full view of the whole, I
shall go back as far as my first settlement in this Pa-
rish. August 29, 1763, I was chosen Rector of *Bath*,
in the County of *Dinwiddie*, in *Virginia*. Ignorance
of the things of God, Prophaneness, and Irreligion
then prevailed among all ranks and degrees. So
that I doubt if even the form of Godliness was to be
found, in any one family of this large and populous
Parish.

Parish. I was a stranger to the people: My doctrines were quite new to them: and were neither preached nor believed by any other clergyman, so far as I could learn, throughout the Province.

My first work was, to explain the Depravity of our Nature: our Fall in Adam, and all the evils consequent thereon: the impossibility of being delivered from them by any thing which we could do, and the necessity of a living Faith, in order to our obtaining help from God. While I continued to insist upon these truths, and on the absolute necessity of being born again, no small outcry was raised against this way, as well as against him that taught it. But by the help of God, I continued to witness the same both to small and great.

The common people, however, frequented the Church more constantly, and in larger numbers than usual. Some were affected at times, so as to drop a tear. But still for a year or more, I perceived no lasting effect, only a few were not altogether so profane as before. I could discover no heart-felt convictions of Sin, no deep or lasting impression of their lost estate. Indeed I have reason to believe that some have been a good deal alarmed at times. But they were shy of speaking to me, thinking it would be presumption) till their convictions wore off.

But in the year 1765, the power of God was more sensibly felt by a few. These were constrained to apply to me, and enquire, "What they must do to be saved? And now I began to preach abroad, as well

well as in private Houses; and to meet little companies in the Evenings, and converse freely on divine things. I believe some were this year converted to God, and thenceforth the work of God slowly went on.

The next year I became acquainted with Mr. *M^r Robert*, Rector of a neighbouring Parish: And we joined hand in hand in the great work. He laboured much therein; and not in vain. A remarkable power attended his Preaching, and many were truly converted to God, not only in his Parish, but in other parts, where he was called to labour.

In the year 1770 and 1771, we had a more considerable out-pouring of the Spirit, at a place in my Parish, called *White-Oak*. It was here first I formed the people into a Society, that they might assist and strengthen each other. The good effects of this were soon apparent. Convictions were deep and lasting: And not only Knowledge, but Faith, and Love, and Holiness continually increased.

In the year 1772, the Revival was more considerable, and extended itself in some places, for fifty or sixty miles round. It increased still more in the following year, and several sinners were truly converted to God. In Spring, 1774, it was more remarkable than ever. The word preached was attended with such energy, that many were pierced to the heart. Tears fell plentifully from the eyes of the Hearers, and some were constrained to cry out. A goodly number were gathered in this year, both

in my Parish, and in many of the neighbouring counties. I formed several Societies out of those which were convinced or converted; and I found it an happy means of building up those that had believed, and preventing the rest from losing their convictions.

In the counties of *Sussex* and *Brunswick*, the work from the year 1773, was chiefly carried on by the labours of the people called *Methodists*. The first of them who appeared in these was Mr. *Robert Williams*, who, you know, was a plain, artless, indefatigable Preacher of the Gospel: He was greatly blest in detecting the hypocrite, raising false foundations, and stirring believers up to press after a present Salvation from the remains of sin. He came to my house in the month of March, in the year 1773. The next year others of his Brethren came, who gathered many Societies, both in this neighbourhood, and in other places, as far as *North Carolina*. They now began to ride the Circuit, and to take care of the Societies already formed, which was rendered an happy means both of deepening and spreading the Work of God.

I earnestly recommended it to my Societies, to pray much for the prosperity of Sion, and for a large out-pouring of the Spirit of God. They did so; and not in vain. We have had a time of refreshing indeed; a Revival of Religion, as great as perhaps ever was known, in country places, in so short a time. It began in the latter end of the year 1775: but was more considerable in January, 1776, the beginning of the present year. It broke out
nearly

nearly at the same time, at three places, not far from each other. Two of these places are in my parish; the other in *Amelia* County, had for many years been notorious for carelessness, profaneness, and immoralities of all kinds. Gaming, Swearing, Drunkenness, and the like were their Delight, while things sacred were their scorn and contempt. However some time last year, one of my Parish (now a Local Preacher) appointed some Meetings among them, and after a while, induced a small number to join in Society. And though few, if any of them were then Believers, yet this was a means of preparing the way of the Lord.

As there were few Converts in my Parish the last year, I was sensible a change of Preachers was wanting. This has often revived the work of God: and so it did at the present time. Last December, one of the Methodist Preachers, Mr. *Shadford*, preached several times at the three places above-mentioned. He confirmed the Doctrine I had long preached: and to many of them not in vain. And while their ears were opened by novelty, God set his word home upon their hearts. Many sinners were powerfully convinced, and Mercy! Mercy! was their cry. In January, the news of Convictions and Conversions were common; and the people of God were inspired with new life and vigor, by the happiness of others. But in a little time they were made thoroughly sensible, that they themselves stood in need of a deeper work in their hearts, than they had yet experienced. And while those were panting
and

and groaning for pardon, these were intreating God with strong cries and tears, to save them from the remains of inbred sin, to *sanctify them throughout, in spirit, soul, and body*; so to *circumcise their hearts*, that they might *love God with all their hearts*; and serve him *with all their strength*.

During this whole winter, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out in a manner we had not seen before. In almost every Assembly might be seen signal instances of Divine Power; more especially in the meetings of the Classes. Here, many old, stout-hearted sinners, felt the force of Truth, and their eyes were opened to discover their guilt and danger. The shaking among the dry bones was increased from week to week: nay, sometimes ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were scarce able to make any reply, but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the Class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions, set the captives at liberty, and enabled them to praise a pardoning God, in the midst of his people. Numbers of old and grey-headed, of middle-aged persons, of youth, yea of little children, were the subjects of this work. Several of the latter we have seen painfully concerned for the wickedness of their lives, and the corruption of their nature. We have instances of this sort, from eight or nine years old. Some of these Children are exceeding

ceeding happy in the Love of God : and they speak of the whole process of the work of God, of their Convictions, the time when, and the manner how they obtained deliverance, with such clearness as might convince an Atheist, that this is nothing else but the great Power of God.

Many in these parts who had long neglected the means of grace, now flocked to hear, not only me, and the travelling Preachers, but also the Exhorters, and Leaders. And the Lord shewed, he is not confined to man : for whether there was preaching, or not, his power was still sensible among the people. And at their meetings for Prayer, some have been in such distress, that they have continued therein for five or six hours. And it has been found that these Prayer-Meetings were singularly useful in promoting the Work of God.

The out-pouring of the Spirit which began here, soon extended itself more or less, thro' most of the Circuit, which is regularly attended by the travelling Preachers, and which takes in a circumference of between four and five hundred miles. And the work went on with a pleasing progress, till the beginning of May; when they held a Quarterly Meeting at *Boisseau's* Chapel, in my Parish. This stands at the lower line of the Parish, thirty miles from *White's* Chapel, at the upper line of it, where the work began. At this meeting, one might truly say, the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain of Divine Influence poured down for more than forty days. The work now became
more

more deep than ever, extended wider, and was swifter in its operations. Many were savingly converted to God, and in a very short time, not only in my Parish, but thro' several parts of *Brunswick, Sussex, Prince George, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Amelia* Counties.

The second day of the Quarterly Meeting, a Love-feast was held. As soon as it began, the power of the Lord came down on the Assembly, like a rushing, mighty wind; and it seemed as if the whole house was filled with the presence of God. A flame kindled and ran from heart to heart. Many were deeply convinced of sin: many mourners were filled with consolation: and many believers were so overwhelmed with Love, that they could not doubt but God had enabled them to love him with *all* their heart.

When the Love-feast was ended, the doors were opened. Many who had staid without, then came in: and beholding the anguish of some, and the rejoicing of others, were filled with astonishment; and not long after, with trembling apprehensions of their own danger. Several of them prostrating themselves before God, cried aloud for mercy. And the convictions which then began in many, have terminated in a happy and lasting Change.

The multitudes that attended on this occasion, returning home all alive to God, spread the flame through their respective neighbourhoods, which ran from family to family. So that within four weeks,
several

several hundreds found the peace of God. And scarce any conversation was to be heard throughout the Circuit, but concerning the things of God: either the complainings of the prisoners, groaning under the spirit of bondage unto fear: or the rejoicing of those whom the Spirit of adoption taught to cry, "Abba Father." The unhappy disputes between *England* and her Colonies, which just before had ingrossed all our conversation, seemed now in most companies to be forgot, while things of far greater importance lay so near the heart. I have gone into many, and not small companies, wherein there did not appear to be one careless soul: and the far greater part seemed perfectly happy in a clear sense of the Love of God.

One of the Doctrines, as you know, which we particularly insist upon, is that of a present Salvation; a Salvation not only from the Guilt and Power, but also from the Root of Sin: *A cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God: a going on to perfection; which we sometimes define, by loving God with all our hearts.* Several who had believed were deeply sensible of their want of this. I have seen both men and women, who had long been happy in a sense of God's pardoning Love; as much convicted on account of sin remaining in their hearts, and as much distressed for a total deliverance from them, as ever I saw any for Justification. Their whole cry was,

"O that

“ O that I now the Rest might know :

Believe and enter in !

Now, Saviour, now, the pow'r bestow,

And let me cease from sin !”

And I have been present, when they believed that God answered this prayer, and bestowed this blessing upon them. I have conversed with them several times since, and have found them thoroughly devoted to God. They all testify that they have received the Gift instantaneously, and by simple Faith. We have sundry witnesses of this perfect Love, who are above all suspicion. I have known the men and their communication for many years, and have ever found them zealous for the cause of God ; Men of Sense and Integrity, Patterns of Piety and Humility ; whose testimony therefore may be depended upon.

It has been frequently observed, that there never was any remarkable Revival of Religion, but some degree of Enthusiasm was mingled with it ; some Wild-fire mixed with the sacred flame. It may be doubted, whether this is not unavoidable in the nature of things. And notwithstanding all the care we have taken, this work has not been quite free from it. But it never rose to any considerable height, neither was of long continuance. In some Meetings there have not been that Decency and Order observed, which I could have wished. Some of our Assemblies resembled the Congregation of the Jews at laying the foundation of the Second Temple in the days of *Ezra*. Some wept for grief ; others shouted for joy, so that it was hard to distinguish one

one from the other. So it was here. The mourning and distress was so blended with the voice of joy and gladness, that it was hard to distinguish the one from the other, till the voice of Joy prevailed: the people shouting with a great shout, so that it might be heard afar off.

To give you a fuller insight into this great work, of God, I subjoin an Extract from two or three of my Letters.



To the Rev. Mr. M^c Robert.

Dinwiddie, May 2, 1776.

Rev. and dear Brother,

YESTERDAY I preached at *Boissèau's* Chapel, to a crowded and attentive Audience. Afterwards the *Methodists* held their Love-feast: during which, as many as pleased, rose one after another, and spoke, in few words, of the goodness of God to their souls. Before three had done speaking, (altho' they spoke but few words) you might see a solemn sense of the presence of God, visible on every Countenance, while tears of sorrow or joy were flowing from many eyes. Several testified the consolation they had received: some believed they were perfected in love. When the passions of the people were rising too high, and breaking thro' all restraint, the Preacher gently checked them, by
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giving

giving out a few verses of an hymn. When most of the Congregation went away, some were so distressed with a sense of their sins, that they could not be persuaded to leave the place. Some lively Christians stayed with them, and continued in prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen mourners were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. And some careless Creatures of the politer sort, who would needs go in, to see what this strange thing meant, felt an unusual power, so that like *Saul* among the Prophets, they fell down on their knees, and cried for mercy among the rest. O may they still continue to pray, till God has given them another heart.

May 3, 1776.

Last night, three or four score of my neighbours met together to keep a Watch-night: at which it is the custom to spend three or four hours in Religious Exercises, and to break up about twelve o'clock. But instead of breaking up at twelve, such was the distress of those that were convinced of sin, that they continued in prayer all night, and till two hours after sun-rise. Here also fourteen or fifteen received a sense of pardon. So that in two days thirty of my own Parish have been justified, besides others, of other Parishes.

Indeed I don't take it for granted that all are justified who think they are so. Some, I fear are mistaken. But I shall judge better of this, when I see the fruits.

The

May 7, 1776.

The work of God still increases among us: I believe within these eight days, more than forty here have been filled with joy and peace in believing. Of these I have had an account, but there may be many more. And several who have been justified some time, believe God has blest them with perfect love.

I have no doubt, but the work now carrying on, is genuine: yet there were some circumstances attending it, which I disliked: such as loud outcries, tremblings, fallings, convulsions. But I am better reconciled, since I read President *Edwards* on the head, who observes, that wherever these most appeared, there was always the greatest and the deepest work.

There is another thing which has given me much pain; The praying of several at one and the same time. Sometimes five or six, or more have been praying all at once in several parts of the room for distressed persons. Others were speaking by way of Exhortation, so that the Assembly appeared to be all in confusion, and must seem to one at a little distance, more like a drunken rabble, than the worshippers of God. I was afraid, this was not doing *all things in decency and order*. Indeed Dr. *Edwards* defends this also. But yet I am not satisfied concerning it. I had heard of it, but never saw it till Sunday Evening. But this is a delicate point. It requires much wisdom, to allay the wild, and not damp the sacred fire.

The first appearance of any thing of the kind at my Chapel, was last Saturday night. I was not there, but a young man who studies at my house was. He is grave, prudent, and solidly religious, without the least tincture of Enthusiasm. He met the Society there in the Afternoon, and would have returned home; but that many who were in great distress, begged him and some others to stay and pray with them. They continued in prayer the whole night, during which about twelve were set at Liberty. But notwithstanding all they could do, there were often two, three, or more, speaking at one time.

I heard of this the next day, when I was at Church, and hastened thence to the Chapel. Some hundreds were assembled there, and were in much confusion when I went in. I went into the Pulpit, and began to sing, adding short Exhortations and Prayers. The confusion ceased: Several spirits were revived, and some Mourners comforted.

Since that Evening, this kind of Confusion has never been known in my neighbourhood. It continued longer in other places: but for some time has been totally gone. But as this abated, the work of Conviction and Conversion usually abated too. Yet blessed be God, it still goes on, though not with such rapidity. I have heard but of two or three that found peace for three weeks: Whereas some time ago, seldom a week past, but I could hear of eight or nine; sometimes between twenty and thirty at one meeting.

I have

I have chiefly spoken of what was done in my Parish. But that you may know a little of what was done elsewhere, I subjoin an Extract from the Letters of two Local Preachers, in the County of *Sussex*.



July 29, 1776.

Rev. Sir,

WITH unspeakable pleasure I acquaint you of the glorious Revival of Religion in our parts. It broke out at our last Quarterly Meeting, and has since wonderfully spread throughout the Circuit. The time seems to be coming, when we shall not need to teach every man his neighbour to know the Lord: for they daily *know him from the least to the greatest*, from little children to men of fourscore. Above seven years have I been exhorting my neighbours; but very few would hear. Now, blessed be God, there are few that will not hear. It is no strange thing for two or three to find the Lord at a Class-meeting: And at a Sunday meeting, although there was no Preacher, ten, fifteen, yea, near twenty have been converted. At a place near me, thirty have found the Lord, within eight days. It is common with us, for men and women to fall down as dead under an Exhortation; but many more under Prayer: perhaps twenty at a time. And some that have not fallen to the earth, have shewn the same distress, wringing their hands, smiting their breasts, and begging all to pray for them

them. With these the work is generally quick; some getting thro' in less than a week, some in two or three days, some in one, two, or three hours. Nay, we have an instance of one that was so indifferent, as to leave her brethren at prayers, and go to bed. But all at once she screamed out, under a sense of her lost estate, and in less than fifteen minutes rejoiced in God her Saviour. And, blessed be God, many of these retain a sense of his favor. Many, who a few weeks ago were despisers and scoffers, are now happy in the Lord. Many old Christians, who were always full of doubts and fears, now walk in the light of his countenance. Some have a clear witness in themselves, that they have given their whole hearts to God. O may God carry on his work among us, until we are all swallowed up in love!"

THOMAS SAUNDERS.

Mr. *Saunders* lives two and twenty miles from me: The writer of the following Letter, about thirty.



July 29, 1776.

Rev. Sir,

ON June the 9th, we had a large congregation. I spoke on, *No man can serve two masters.* Several appeared to be much distressed, two women in particular. We spent above an hour in prayer for them, and they arose in peace. When we met the Class, we suffered all that desired it, to stay.

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The Leader only put a question or two to each member. This was scarce ended, when the fire of God's love was kindled. Praises hung on the lips of many. And many cried out, "*What must we do to be saved?*" Thus it swiftly went on; every now and then one rising with faith in Jesus. Surely this was one of the days of heaven! Such a day I never expected to see in Time. While we were met, one *Isham Whitehead* was observed to be looking through the crack of the door. The door being opened, he came with it, and being unable to stand, fell on the floor quite helpless. But in two or three hours he rose and praised a pardoning God: While one of the Class, who had been justified some time, received a Blessing greatly superior to any thing he had known before. We have reason to believe, that on this day, fifteen were enabled to believe in Jesus.

Saturday, June 15. I was speaking to the Class, and one found peace to her soul. Sunday, 16. I spoke from, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, to four or five hundred people. This was also a day of Pentecost. Convictions seized on numbers, who wrestled with God, till their souls were set at liberty. A young woman told me "She heard, many people fell down, and she would come, to help them up." This she said in scorn. She came accordingly. The power of God soon seized her, and she wanted helping up herself. But it was not long before he helped her, by giving her faith in Christ. We believe twenty souls found peace this day. O may we see many such days!

July,

July 7. I spoke to a large Congregation. Afterwards I was going to give out an hymn, when one was so powerfully struck, that he could not hold a joint still, and roared aloud for mercy. I immediately went to prayer: The cries of the people meantime greatly increasing. After prayer, *Benjamin Tyus*, late a great opposer, jumped up, and began to praise God, with a countenance so altered, that those who beheld him were filled with astonishment. Our meeting continued from twelve at noon, till twelve at night, during which, God raised up about fifteen more witnesses.

The Thursday following, six of those who were convinced on Sunday, found peace in believing. We hear of many others converted in the neighbourhood, several of whom were strong Opposers: And some hoary-headed ones, who had been strict Pharisees from their youth up.

Sunday 21. We had a large and attentive Auditory, and the power of the Lord prevailed. The next day I was much tempted to doubt, whether I was sent of God to preach or not? I prayed earnestly to the Lord, that he would satisfy me, and that he would keep all false fire from among us. Afterwards I preached. While I was speaking, a Mother and her Daughter were so struck, that they trembled every joint: But before I concluded, both found peace. Glory be to God!

I am, &c.

JOHN DICKINS.

God

God has made Examples of several Opposers—Examples not of Justice, but of Mercy. Some of them came to the Assembly with hearts full of rancour against the people of God, so that had it been in their power, they would have dragged them away, to prison, if not to death. But unexpectedly their stubborn hearts were bowed down, being pierced with the arrows of the Almighty. In a moment they were filled with distress and anguish, their laughter turned into mourning, and their Cursing into Prayer. And frequently in less than a week, their heaviness has been turned into joy. Of this sort are several of our most zealous and circumspect walkers at this day. A goodly number of these are rich in this world; yet they are now brought so low, that they are willing to be taught by all, and to be the servants of all.

A Gentleman in this Parish, in particular, had much opposed and contradicted: He was fully persuaded, that all outward appearances, either of distress or joy, were mere deceit. But as he was walking to his Mill, about half a mile from his House, deep Conviction fell upon him. The terrors of the Lord beset him round about, and distress and anguish got hold upon him. When he came to the Mill and found no one there, he took that opportunity of prostrating himself before God, and pouring out his soul in his presence. As his distress was great, his cries were loud, and his prayer importunate. The Lord heard him, and set his soul at liberty before he left the place. And the power which came upon him

him was so great, that it seemed as if his whole frame were dissolving.

Upon the whole, this has been a great, a deep, a swift, and an extensively glorious Work. Both the nature and manner of it have been nearly the same, wherever its benign influence reached. Where the greatest work was, where the greatest number of souls have been convinced and converted to God, there have been the most out-cries, tremblings, convulsions, and all sorts of external signs. I took all the pains I could, that these might be kept within bounds, that our good might not be evil spoken of. This I did, not by openly inveighing against them in the public assembly ; but by private Advices to Local Preachers and others, as opportunity would permit. This method had its desired effect, without putting a sword into the hands of the wicked. Wherever the contrary method has been taken, where these things have been publicly opposed, when they have been spoken against in promiscuous Congregations, the effect has always been this : The men of the world have been highly gratified, and the children of God deeply wounded. The former have plumed themselves, as tho' they were the men who kept within due bounds, and those that had " made so much ado about Religion," were no better than hot-brained Enthusiasts. I cannot but think this has a great tendency to hinder the work of God. Indeed if we thought, that God wrought every thing irresistibly, we should not fear this. But we know the contrary : we know, that as some things promote, so others hinder his work. I grant,
Means

Means should be used to prevent all indecency : but they should be used with great caution and tenderness, that the cure may be effected, if possible, without damping the work of God.

With regard to the Inward Work, there has been a great variety as to the length, and depth, and circumstances of the Convictions in different persons; but all in general have been at first alarmed with a sense of the multitude and heinousness of their sins, with an awful view of the wrath of God, and certain destruction, if they persisted therein. Hence they betook themselves to Prayer, and as time permitted, to the use of all other means of Grace: although deeply sensible of the vileness of their performances, and the total insufficiency of all they could do to merit the pardon of one sin, or deserve the favour of God. They were next convinced of their Unbelief, and that Faith in Christ is the only condition of Justification. They continued thus waiting upon the Lord, till he spoke peace to their souls. This he usually did in one moment, in a clear and satisfactory manner, so that all their griefs and anxieties vanished away, and they were filled with joy and peace in believing. Some indeed have had their burdens removed, so that they felt no condemnation. And yet, they could not say, they were forgiven. But they could not be satisfied with this. They continued instant in prayer, till they knew the Lamb of God had taken away their sins.

Most

Most of these had been suddenly convinced of Sin : but with some it was otherwise. Without any sense of their Guilt, they were brought to use the Means of Grace, by mere dint of persuasion : And afterwards they were brought by degrees to see themselves, and their want of a Saviour. But before they found deliverance, they have had as deep a sense of their helpless misery as others. One in my Parish was a remarkable instance of this. He was both careless and profane to a great degree ; and remained quite unconcerned, while many of his companions were sorrowing after God, or rejoicing in his Love. One of his Acquaintance advised him to seek the Lord. He said, " I see no necessity for it as yet. When I do, I will seek him as well as others." His Friend persuaded him to try for one week, watching against sin, and going by himself every day. He did so ; and though he was quite stupid when he began, yet before the end of the week, he was thoroughly sensible of the load of sin, and is now happy in God.

If you ask, " How stands the case now with those that have been the subjects of the late work ? I have the pleasure to inform you, I have not heard of any one Apostate yet. It is true, many since their first joy abated, have given way to doubts and fears, have had their confidence in God much shaken, and have got into much heaviness. Several have passed through this, and are now confirmed in the ways of God. Others are in it still ; and chiefly those over whom Satan had gained an advantage, by hurrying them into irregular warmth,
or

or into expressions not well guarded. I have seen some of these in great distress, and just ready to cast away hope.

I have a great deal upon my hands at present, and have little time either to write or read. The difficulties and temptations of the lately converted are so many and various, that I am obliged to be in as many places as I can: For now is the critical hour. A man of Zeal, tho' with little Knowledge or Experience, may be an instrument of converting Souls. But after they are converted, he will have need of much Knowledge, much Prudence and Experience, to provide proper Food or Physic for the several Members, according to their State, Habit, and Constitution. This at present seems in a great measure to devolve upon *me*. And tho' I have been twenty years in the Lord's service, yet I find I am quite unequal to the task. However, I will do what I can; and may the Lord bless my endeavours!

The enemy is busy night and day, in sowing the tares of Division among the Wheat. And in some places he has prevailed so far as to plunge some of them in the water. In other places little feuds and animosities arise, to grieve the Preachers and damp the spirits of the people. On these occasions, they commonly apply to *me*; and all is well, at least for a season.—When I consider, What it is to watch over souls, and how much labour and pains it implies, to discharge it in any degree, I cannot but cry out with the Apostle, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

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However, upon the whole, things are in as flourishing a condition, as can reasonably be expected, considering what great numbers, of various capacities and stations have been lately added to the Societies.

But after all, a great part of *Virginia* is still in a very dark and deplorable condition. This Province contains sixty-two Counties; and the late work has reached only seven or eight of them. Nor has it been universal even in these, but chiefly in the Circuit, which is regularly visited by the Preachers. In this alone very many hundreds have in a few months been added to the Lord. And some are adding still. May He continue to pour out his Spirit upon us, and increase the number of the faithful every day!

Our highest Gratitude is due to our gracious God; for he hath done marvellous things! In a short time he hath wrought a great work: And let who will speak against it, it is evident beyond all contradiction, that many open and profligate sinners of all sorts, have been effectually and lastingly changed into pious, uniform Christians. So that every thinking man must allow, that God hath been with us of a truth, and that his *glory dwells in our Land.*

I am,

Your sincere Friend,

and Brother in Christ,

DEVEREUX JARRATT.

Sep. 10, 1776.

[To Mr. Thomas Rankin.]

T.

To the Rev. Mr. WESLEY.

June 24, 1778.

Rev. and dear Sir,

You have the Narrative of the Rev. Mr. *Jarratt*.
I send this as a Supplement to it.

AT our little Conference held in *Philadelphia*, May, 1775, Mr. *Shadford* was appointed Assistant for *Brunswick* Circuit in *Virginia*. He found there about Eight hundred joined together, but in a very confused manner. Many of them did not understand the nature of meeting in Clafs; and many of the Claffes had no Leader. He resolved to begin in good earnest, and the Preachers with him were like-minded. Their constant custom was, as soon as Preaching was over, to speak to all the members of the Society, one by one. If the Society was large, one Preacher spoke to a part, and he that came next, to the rest. By this means they learned more of our Doctrine and Discipline in a year, than in double the time before. The fruit soon appeared: the Congregations swiftly increased, and many were pricked to the heart. Many that were a little affected, desired to see the nature of meeting in

Class: and while one was speaking either to those that were groaning for redemption, or those who had found peace with God, these were frequently cut to the heart, and sometimes enabled on the spot to praise a pardoning God. Nay, sometimes four, five, or six found peace with God, before the meeting was over.

The work of God thus increasing on every side, more Preachers were soon wanting. And God raised up several young men, who were exceeding useful as Local Preachers.

After Mr. *Shadford* had been about Eight Months in the Circuit, Mr. *Jarratt* desired, his Parish might be included in it: that all who chose it might have the privilege of meeting in Class, and being members of the Society. He soon saw the salutary effects. Many that had had but small desires before, began to be much alarmed, and laboured earnestly after eternal life. In a little time numbers were deeply awakened, and many tasted of the pardoning Love of God. In a few months Mr. *Jarratt* saw more fruit of his labours, than he had done for many years. And he went on with the Preachers hand in hand, both in Doctrine and Discipline.

When Mr. *Shadford* took an account of the Societies, before he came to the Conference in 1776, they contained two thousand, six hundred, and sixty-four persons: to whom eighteen hundred were added in one year. Above a thousand of these had found peace with God; many of whom thirsted for
all

all the mind that was in Christ. And divers believed, God had *circumcised their heart, to love him with all their heart, with all their soul.*

This Revival of Religion spread through fourteen Counties in *Virginia*: and thro' *Bute* and *Hallifax* Counties in *North-Carolina*. At the same time we had a blessed out-pouring of the Spirit, in several Counties bordering upon *Maryland*.

Our Conference was at *Baltimore Town*, on the 22d of May. Here I received a Letter from Mr. *Jarratt*, part of which I insert.

May 11, 1776.

“ I praise God for his goodness in so plentifully
 “ pouring out of his Spirit, on men, women, and
 “ children. I believe threescore in and near my
 “ Parish, have believed through Grace, since the
 “ Quarterly Meeting. Such a Work I never saw
 “ with my eyes. Sometimes Twelve, sometimes
 “ Fifteen find the Lord at one Class-meeting. I am
 “ just returned from meeting two Classes. Much
 “ of the power of God was in each.—My dear
 “ Partner is now happy in God her Saviour. I
 “ clap my hands exulting, and praise God. Blessed
 “ be the Lord, that ever he sent you and your Bre-
 “ thren into this part of his vineyard! Many Chil-
 “ dren, from eight to twelve years old, are now
 “ under strong conviction, and some of them are
 “ savingly converted to God. I was much comfort-
 “ ed this morning at the *White-Oak Chapel*. The
 “ people there are of a truly teachable Spirit: those

" particularly, who profess to have obtained the
 " pure Love of God. They are as little children.
 " When you consider, how the Work is spreading on
 " every side, you will readily excuse me from being
 " at your conference."

Monday June 24. I left Leesburg, in company with
Wright Brickell, (a truly devout man, who now rests
 from his labours) and came to *Petersburg* on *Saturday*
 the 29th, where I preached, about Three in the
 Afternoon, and then rode on to Mr. *Bosheua's*, about
 ten miles farther. A little company was waiting for
 me, and God was with them of a truth.

Sunday, 30. I was comforted by the sight of my
 dear Brother *Shadford*. But I was weak in body,
 thro' riding so far in extreme heat, and much exer-
 cised in mind: and did not know how I should be
 able to go thro' the labour of the day. We went to
 the Chapel at Ten, where I had liberty of mind, and
 strength of body beyond my expectation. After
 preaching I met the Society, and was more relieved,
 both in body and mind. At Four in the Afternoon
 I preached again, from *I set before thee an open door,*
and none can shut it. I had gone through about
 two thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the
 words home to the present Now, when such power
 descended, that hundreds fell to the ground, and the
 house seemed to shake with the presence of God.
 The Chapel was full of White and Black, and many
 were without that could not get in. Look wherever
 we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes, and
 faces

faces bathed in tears: and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. My voice was drowned amidst the groans and prayers of the congregation. I then sat down in the pulpit; and both Mr. *Shadford* and I were so filled with the divine Presence, that we could only say, *This is none other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!* Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven, wives their husbands: Parents their children, and children their parents: Brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. In short, those who were happy in God themselves, were for bringing all their friends to him in their arms. This mighty effusion of the Spirit, continued for above an hour: In which time many were awakened, some found peace with God, and others, his pure love. We attempted to speak or sing again and again: but no sooner we began, than our voices were drowned. It was with much difficulty that we at last persuaded the people, as night drew on, to retire to their own homes.

Tuesday, July 2. I rode with Mr. *Shadford* to Mr. *Jarratt's*; who with Mrs. *Jarratt* received us with open arms. I preached the next day, not far from his house, to a deeply attentive congregation. Many were much affected at the preaching; but far more at the meeting of the Society. Mr. *Jarratt* himself was constrained to praise God aloud, for his great Love to him and to his people.

Sunday, 7. I preached at *White's Chapel*, about twenty miles from Mr. *Jarratt's*. I intended to
preach

preach near the house, under the shade of some large trees. But the rain made it impracticable. The house was greatly crowded, and four or five hundred stood at the doors and windows, and listened with unabated attention. I preached from *Ezekiel's* vision of the *dry bones*. *And there was a great shaking.* I was obliged to stop again and again, and beg of the people to compose themselves. But they could not: Some on their knees, and some on their faces, were crying mightily to God all the time I was preaching. Hundreds of Negroes were among them, with the tears streaming down their black faces. The same power we found in meeting the Society, and many were enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable. In the cool of the Evening I preached out of doors, and many found an uncommon blessing.

Every day in the ensuing week I preached to large and attentive congregations. Indeed the weather was violently hot, and the fatigue of riding and preaching so often was great. But God made up all this to me, by his comfortable presence. *Thursday, 11.* I preached to a large congregation, at the Preaching-house near Mr. *Jarratt's*. After preaching at several places on Friday and Saturday, on *Sunday, 14.* I came to Mr. *Boschua's*, where I preached and met the Society. The congregation was, as before, abundantly larger than the Chapel could contain. And we had almost such a day as fourteen days ago: only attended with a more deep and solemn work. What a work is God working in
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this corner of Mr. *Jarratt's* Parish! It seemed as if all the Country, for nine or ten miles round, were ready to turn to God.

In the evening I rode to Mr. *Smith's*, and found a whole Family fearing and loving God. Mr. *Smith*, a sensible and judicious man, had been for many years a Justice of the Peace. By hearing the truth as it is in Jesus, he and his wife first, and then all his children had attained that peace that passeth all understanding. He observed, "How amazing the Change was, which had been lately wrought in the place where he lived! That before the Methodists came into these parts, when he was called by his office to attend the Court, there was nothing but Drunkenness, Cursing, Swearing, and Fighting; most of the time the Court sat: Whereas now, nothing is heard but Prayer and Praise, and conversing about God, and the things of God."

Monday 15. I rode towards *North-Carolina*. In every place the Congregations were large, and received the word with all readiness of mind. I know not that I have spent such a week since I came to *America*. I saw every where such a simplicity in the people, with such a vehement thirst after the word of God, that I frequently preached and continued in prayer till I was hardly able to stand. Indeed there was no getting away from them, while I was able to speak one sentence for God.

Sunday 21. I preached at *Ronoaky* Chapel to more than double of what the House would contain. In
general,

general, the White People were within the Chapel, and the Black People without. The windows being all open, every one could hear, and hundreds felt the word of God. Many were bathed in tears, and others rejoicing with joy unspeakable. When the Society met, many could not refrain from praising God aloud. I preached to a large company in the Afternoon, and concluded the day with prayer and thanksgiving.

Tuesday 23. I crossed the *Ronoaky* River, and preached at a Chapel in *North-Carolina*. And I preached every day to very large and deeply attentive Congregations: although not without much labour and pain, through the extreme heat of the weather.

On *Tuesday 30*, was our Quarterly Meeting. I scarce ever remember such a season. No Chapel or Preaching-house in *Virginia* would have contained one third of the Congregation. Our Friends knowing this, had contrived to shade with boughs of trees a space that would contain two or three thousand persons. Under this, wholly screened from the rays of the sun, we held our general Love-feast. It began between Eight and Nine on Wednesday-Morning, and continued till Noon. Many testified that they had *redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins*. And many were enabled to declare, that it had *cleansed them from all sin*. So clear, so full, so strong was their testimony, that while some were speaking their experience, hun-
dreds

dreds were in tears, and others vehemently crying to God, for Pardon or Holiness.

About Eight our Watch-night began. Mr. *Farratt* preached an excellent Sermon: the rest of the Preachers exhorted and prayed with divine energy. Surely, for the Work wrought on these two days, many will praise God to all eternity!

THOMAS RANKIN.

F I N I S.



